

Class Struggle

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DITCH THE PROGRAMME FOR NATIONAL RECOVERY!

THREATS OF new wage claims by the Management Science Finance union, and by 40,000 teachers, have brought to a head the growing divisions in the trade union leadership over the three-year deal with Fianna Fáil, the *Programme for National Recovery*, (PNR).

The deal forbade industrial action for wage claims in return for an average 2.5% increase per year and promises of job creation. After two years of the deal, sections of the union leadership are now under pressure because of the profits boom in the economy, the doubling of inflation to 4.5% and the disastrous failure of net job creation.

In the run-up to the ICTU special conference on January 31st the MSF and a number of other union leaders will be pushing for a modification of the PNR to allow for local bargaining in companies where wage increases can easily be won. What they will not be pressing for is any complete break with the disastrous policies of collaboration with the Irish bourgeoisie which have rescued capitalist profitability at the expense of huge cuts in health, local services and education, by massive increases in productivity, job shake-outs and, above all, by emigration of young workers, running at 46,000 this year.

Despite promises of 20,000 new jobs per annum there has been no increase whatever over the past five years in the total numbers employed in industry—306,000 according to the latest Labour Force Survey. Redundancies have run neck and neck with job-creation; and even then many of the new jobs are part-time or low-paid compared to those lost. This is a vital issue for the working class movement as a whole, but it remains only a side-issue even for the "left" union bureaucrats who are challenging the limitations of the PNR.

Chief among these is Brian

Anderson of MSF who publicly debated the PNR in Dublin on Oct. 18th with Philip Flynn, one of the architects of the pact. Flynn's defence of the deal was a classic piece of "new realism" worthy of the most right-wing trade union bureaucrat. The agreement was necessary because of "prevailing economic conditions". The "country" was in a deep economic crisis. The "trade union movement was marginalized". It was necessary to salvage the very concept of "consensus" itself between the unions and the government. Representing the interests of two million men women and children out of the 3.5 million in the state, the ICTU "had an onerous responsibility"—to be "realistic".

Flynn's claims for the achievements of the pact ignored emigration; ignored the failure of net job creation; ignored the huge increases in productivity and profits that had been its principal result; ignored the savage cuts in health and local services for which it had given cover. Instead he claimed that wages had kept their purchasing power and that the forty-hour week had been "dented". He then listed almost every new activity undertaken by State companies and claimed them as the result of the PNR!

Flynn's claims were effectively challenged by Anderson and by nine out of ten speakers from the floor. The employers were laughing their way to the bank. The total wage bill was up by 15% while profits were up by 40%. Profit rates of 35p to every £1 in wages had shifted to 53p profits to every £1 in wages during the 1980s. Far from enjoying promised tax relief on wages, workers were now paying more overall in indirect taxation. On the jobs fraud, on unemployment, emigration and poverty, Anderson's arguments were a knock-down. Flynn's claims on the reduction in the 40-hour week of one hour—conceded only locally to a few employments—was laughed at. In the discussion the IWG

attacked Flynn's claim that the trade union movement had been "marginalized". It was the self-interested bureaucrats at the top who had felt marginalized because the government was refusing to guarantee their secure well-paid role as brokers unless they helped impose a savage austerity programme.

These are the very same "leaders" who called off the massive anti-cuts demonstrations in the summer of 1987 for the sake of the negotiations with Fianna Fáil, and who had welcomed the financial provision for 10,000 public sector redundancies because it would bring order into the process of "rationalization". And even now Flynn

openly supported "rationalization" in the health services!

The PNR was a major act of treachery to the interests of the working class as a whole. It meant that the trade union leadership had once more fallen in behind the largest bourgeois populist party; had once more surrendered the independence and fighting ability of the working class. Yet again they re-inforced the illusions among many workers that the only pragmatic option for social development in Ireland is through collaboration with the populist bourgeois party of Fianna Fáil.

While we support Anderson and the MSF in every act of defiance of the PNR, and call for them to spread it, Anderson's line of argument in no way represents a fundamental alternative or a real break with Fianna Fáil or class collaboration. His Communist Party actually believes that the working class parties should have blocked with Haughey and Fianna Fáil politically rather than allow them to form the present government with the more loud-mouthed right-wingers of O'Malley's Progressive Democrats. He had "nothing but praise" for the "policies" of the ICTU and disagreed only with their "emphasis". He used utterly false and opportunist explanations of the economy when arguing against wage restraint. Every pound off profits and onto wages was a

pound likely to be spent in the Irish economy, he claimed, rather than expatriated by the capitalists! As if native Irish capitalism could be better advised to improve wages and keep its capital in Ireland for the benefit of all! He even claimed that the Irish bourgeoisie was never likely to confront the unions here head-on in the way Thatcher did. Irish workers, he claimed, would never put up with the attacks that British workers did. This nonsense is but thinly disguised national chauvinism typical of the CPI. Anyone looking at the rules of the new SIPTU 'super-union' can see that the Irish union bureaucrats are voluntarily offering to the bosses many of the controls that Thatcher demanded and won from their bureaucrat cousins in the TUC.

For socialists the unrestricted wages struggle is a vital part of defending our living conditions but also of challenging the whole capitalist system itself. Wages are far from being the only issue, however. It would be suicide for the working class to ignore the need to struggle for the right to work in a period when one in five has no job and the entire natural increase in the labour force is emigrating. Flynn addresses this question by calling for a new PNR for the next period, from Nov. 1990 onwards, which will "call for" unemployment to be halved. Why only halved?

A fighting campaign is needed to rally workers to smash the PNR now around the following platform:

- Fight to commit union branches and union delegates to ditch the PNR at the ICTU conference.
- Oppose all new negotiations for any deal with the Government which is not based on militant struggle or which would restrict the right to strike.
- Demand full automatic compensation for inflation, a national minimum wage of no less than two-thirds of the industrial average, and real increases to match productivity.

● Demand a national scheme of useful public works to create jobs for all, in infrastructures, social services, environmental protection, at trade union rates and under workers' control! ■

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BUILD THE FIGHT TO DECRIMINALIZE ABORTION!

Our picture by Derek Spelers (REPORT) shows the mass demo for "freedom of information on

abortion" at the High Court on 9th September. TCD student president and Labour Party activist Ivana Bacik leads the crowd in chanting abortion Information telephone numbers, in defiance of the Hamilton Ruling. When the High Court found "no evidence" of defiance and referred the issue to Europe, the Union of

Students in Ireland contented itself with a "victory" and called off the campaign. But on November 28th the issue is being appealed to the Supreme Court. Whatever the verdict, abortion Information remains illegal and liable to new injunctions. If the conflicts that lie ahead are not to result in new victories for the

Right, a campaign must now be built that will mobilize students, workers and housewives around the fight to decriminalize abortion. See page 6 for more details.

For Free and Legal Abortion on Demand!

The Crisis of Stalinism

Whose Democracy?

THE EVENTS in Czechoslovakia, East Germany underline how the question of 'democracy' lies at the heart of the turmoil sweeping the Stalinist states. Increasingly we find the demands of the oppositionists described in the terms of the bourgeois revolutions of the 18th and 19th centuries against the Absolute Monarchs: Down the Autocracy! Freedom of Conscience! Separation of Party and State! Free Elections! Free Civil Society!

The experience of the USSR and Poland where even restricted elections have weakened the grip of the Stalinists, has strengthened the belief that real political freedom means parliamentary democracy. The pro-capitalist media of the West delight in this apparent proof that, in the so-called 'socialist states', the workers want their very own Westminster. Behind this is their belief that 'communism' is dead and that 'democracy' means capitalism. Pro-democracy is automatically assumed to mean pro-capitalism.

The irony, however, lies deeper than they think. When the Stalinists finally consolidated their dictatorship over the proletariat in the USSR, it was precisely a 'parliamentary constitution' that they introduced to cover over the crushing of workers' democracy.

There is not a shadow of a doubt that the masses in the Stalinist states do have illusions in the parliamentary systems of the big capitalist countries, the imperialist states of the West. The systematic stifling, by the rulers of these states, of political life, of political discussion and of independent initiatives have a lot more in common do indeed resemble the regimes of the despots of old against which the bourgeois revolutions were fought.

But if the only alternative to the unchecked rule of the Polit Bureau is a daily dose of Dáil question time on Soviet radio and five yearly elections packaged by an East German equivalent of Satchi & Satchi...

WHOSE INTERESTS?

Neither the Stalinists nor western propagandists bother to question whose class interests democracy should serve—the workers or the bosses? Parliamentary democracy serves the interests of the bosses. In the 'mother country' of parliamentary democracy itself, a ruling government, elected by a minority of the population, has been able to inflict three long terms of attacks on the unions, the health services, abolishing local-government democracy etc., against the interests of the vast majority.

Parliamentary democracy is a smokescreen for the real—and profoundly undemocratic—rule of a tiny handful of capitalists whose economic power dictates to elected governments. While parliaments

are at liberty to chatter on endlessly, real decision-making and power lie outside of the debating chamber.

The Central Bankers who determine the profit rates for those who speculate in the 'national debt', the diplomats who crawl to Washington and London, the top civil servants who plan hospital closures, spending cuts and privatisations, the police chiefs who launch country-wide house-searches, the secret deals in state insurance with magnates like Goodman—these are but a few examples of the real business of government which are carried out without any accountability to "the elected representatives of the people".

And if parliament gets in the way of this rule either its powers are reduced or it is scrapped altogether as in Chile in '73. Such is the nature of "democracy" in bourgeois capitalist society.

This does not mean that

revolutionary marxists are against democracy. It means that we are in favour of *working class democracy*. A five yearly election of 166 TDs cannot be the basis for such democracy. In our daily lives we are faced with the need to decide what to do, in our work and in our communities.

How can production be controlled for the social good

and for full employment? How

can we ensure that elected

representatives act in our

interests? How can real power

be put in the hands of elected

and accountable bodies? Afar

more direct form of democ-

racy is needed.

The original soviets created

by the Russian workers and

peasants in 1905, and again

in 1917, are the best models

yet created for such demo-

cracy. The soviets were assem-

blies of delegates from the

workplaces and the commu-

nities, on a city-wide basis. In

turn such soviets selected

delegates for a Central So-

viet for the whole town or re-
gion, and so on right up to
national level. What was
unique about such democracy
was not its directness but the
accountability of delegates at
every level. All delegates could
be immediately recalled by
the people who elected them,
all were subject to regular re-
election, none were paid any
more than the workers they
represented or received any
special privileges.

The soviets debated policy,
decided on policy and executed
policy. They removed in one
stroke the intimate separation
of powers so beloved of
the professional politicians of
capitalism. What is more they
controlled their own armed
forces—the workers militia.

This system of democracy
enabled the working class to
rule. It was a thousand times
more representative and effi-
cient than capitalist parlia-
mentary democracy. The trag-
edy was, that in an isolated
and backward Russia such a
regime could not survive. A
European revolution that
could have bolstered it did
not materialise. The result
was that the Stalinist bu-
reaucracy in the 1920s first
usurped political power from
the workers and then bruta-
lly destroyed every vestige



▲ Kremlin bureaucracy playing at parliament

of working class political de-
mocracy only to replace it with
its own rule.

It is not surprising that in
the Stalinist states today the
'soviet'—grotesque parodies
of the original workers' and
peasants' councils—are hated
by the masses. But the alter-
native is not to turn the clock
back to capitalist 'democracy'.
It is to build completely new
councils as the basis for a
completely new workers de-
mocracy, a democracy that can
and must triumph through a
political revolution against the

ruling bureaucracy.

Without such a revolution
the development even of par-
liamentary forms of demo-
cracy in the Stalinist states
will prove a cruel deception
for the masses. The 'sepa-
ration of powers' between par-
liamentary and economic life
is not possible within the de-
generate workers states be-
cause the economy is not pri-
vately owned. Under capital-
ism the class interests of the
bourgeoisie are hidden by the
smokescreen of private own-
ership and decision-making.
But in a completely statified
economy this is destroyed.

In order to create a façade
for their own dictatorship, the
Stalinists had to resort to
blatantly rigged elections and
the bureaucratically imposed
'leading role of the party'. Not
surprisingly, the first de-
mands of an increasingly
confident proletariat is for this
fraud to be scrapped and a
'real' parliament be put in its
place.

DEATHKNELL

A freely elected parliament
would sound the deathknell
of Stalinist control—but it
would not herald the victory
of the proletariat. The Stalinists
now recognise their bank-
ruptcy and are hastening to
save their own bacon by also
introducing the norms of pri-
vate ownership that are the
necessary counterpart to bour-
geois democratic systems.
Success in this would leave
the workers of the Stalinist
states at the mercy of the
operation of the world market
and would lead quickly to
mass unemployment, plant
closures, inflation and an end
to food subsidies and the so-
cial wage.

Revolutionaries have to find
ways of relating to the de-
mands for 'democracy' today.
We must strengthen their
anti-Stalinist elements but
counter the illusions in par-
liamentarianism.

It would be fruitless to
simply counterpose 'soviet' to
'parliament', no more than in
the capitalist countries. But
in the fight for democracy we
will seize every opportunity
to invest it with a working
class content—even in the con-
text of the existing reform
movements.

In taking this path the pro-
democracy masses can be won
to a political revolution and a
programme of workers' de-
mocracy. This will not only
consign to the dustbin of history
the Stalinist oppressors, it will
also strike a death-blow world-wide
against workers' illusions in the democracy of
the capitalist class which
sanctifies the exploitation and
insecurity of the majority of
humanity. ■

PORNOGRAPHY: Is censorship the answer?

A CONFERENCE was held in Trinity in October to launch a campaign against pornography and censorship. It was organised by the Campaign Against Pornography and Censorship (CPC) headed by Catherine Itzin of the National Council for Civil Liberties (NCCL).

A wide range of people attended the conference—from liberals through radical feminists to Labour activists. The CPC oppose the type of censorship which in the past banned books like 'The Joy of Sex'. Good sex education and information which promotes a good sexual relationship and erotica" was what was needed.

So far, so good. Against censorship.

But how do CPC resolve the contradiction of being against censorship in general on the one hand and for censorship of pornography on the other? Catherine Itzin told us they are "against the censorship of free speech. However, pornography is not free speech" Why? Because it portrays the sexual objectification and subordination of women. It depicts rape and actual killing of women on screen in 'snuff' movies. Furthermore "evidence shows" there is a link between the violence of porn and sexual violence against women. Clodagh Corcoran summed up for the group: "Pornography is a form of censorship of women's rights". As such it should be censored.

The theory of the link between porn and sexual violence originated in the US with Andrea Dworkin in her

book 'Pornography: Men Possessing Women'. In it she argues from a radical feminist viewpoint that pornography is a celebration of male power: the degradation of women the means of celebrating that power. Dworkin claims that pornography is not merely the depiction of violence against women, it is violence against women. In the CPC, Catherine Itzin has expanded upon and popularised these views, equating the violence of war and the violence of pornography, treating them both as the eternal "products of patriarchy".

LUDICROUS

These views of pornography are wrong and misleading. The idea that an explicit representation of sexual activity—however sexist the imagery used—is the most fundamental manifestation of women's oppression is ludicrous. Women's oppression dates from the birth of class society. It is rooted in the unequal social position of women in class society and in the existence of the family as a domestic prison for women.

Where sexist imagery is widespread, it is merely a reflection of this material reality, not its principal cause. Sexist images and stereotypes of women in advertising, television, mainstream films and religion has a far wider audience than has pornography.

Apart from sexism what is objectionable about pornography? The depiction of violence? Mainstream films frequently depict scenes of gore and carnage. So does art and litera-

ture. Are these too to be censored? If there are films made that involve the actual killing of women or of youth then this enters the arena of criminality and the film-makers should be dealt with accordingly. Censorship is hardly an adequate or effective way to deal with killers.

Moreover, who is to be the judge of what people find sexually stimulating to read or view? Is it possible to say with any certainty where pornography ends and erotica begins? The CPC are in fact claiming that their subjective judgements have some objective basis! It is true that pornography is traditionally male-oriented and that it employs and exploits crude and degraded images of women. It is true, too, that pornography is a multi-national industry trading on the sexism deeply entrenched in capitalist society. But there is little evidence to suggest the men—and women—who enjoy pornography and adapt it to their own complex sexual needs are thereby damaged. Sue George argues this case convincingly in her collection of essays 'Feminism and Censorship'. The CPC campaign runs the dangers of enshrining puritanism as a virtue. In a country like Ireland, particularly, women are only too well aware of what that has meant.

The CPC have set as their immediate aim the need to lobby the government to amend the Video Recording Bill (VRB) currently going through the Oireachtas to specifically include a ban on pornography. As it is, the pro-

visions of the VRB are much more stringent than the film censorship already operating, and if passed, they will also apply to films. If the CPC are successful in their lobbying and a new amendment on pornography is included in the Bill, censorship will have been greatly strengthened.

We totally oppose any strengthening of the censorship laws. We oppose the VRB and the campaign against pornography. For tougher censorship on pornography will not end or alleviate the exploitation of women and youth. But it will strengthen the power of the state to interfere in peoples lives and continue its ban on scientific sex education, abortion information, controversial films and books.

The state's power must not be strengthened. We fight for an end to all censorship by the capitalist state and in particular we call on all trade unionists and socialists to oppose this Bill and the campaign for any censorship. At the same time, we not neutral on the issue of sexist imagery. We support all campaigns against sexism within the labour movement; we support the efforts of women to get offensive posters or ads taken down in the workplace; and campaigns against sexual harassment at work. We are for concrete measures to protect women from rape, such as better lighting and transport facilities.

In the media we demand the right of reply to all sexist images and features. We call on print workers to help realise this demand by refusing to print such articles or pictures unless the right of reply from a union or relevant campaign/organisation is guaranteed. By these methods—the methods of direct action—we aim, through argument and debate, to change the backward consciousness of male workers and to thereby remove an important obstacle on the road to uniting the men and women of the working class. ■

What Strategy for Derry Workers' Struggles?

THE DECISION TO implement recently the new Social Services order, passed in August in Westminster by the Tories, has led to anger and resentment among the unemployed in the North. A campaign by unemployed centres has been launched to force the Tories to back down.

The Actively Seeking Work Bill demands of the unemployed that they furnish evidence in the form of letters from the employers to whom they have applied for jobs, on pain of being removed from the register. The Bill is a typical piece of vindictive Tory practice. They know only too well that in the areas of large unemployment, like Derry, Strabane, Omagh etc. the unemployed know there is no chance of a job. Yet they are expected to go through the motions of writing letters, paying for stamps, simply to comply with the DHSS rules. The Tories' real purpose is to drive the unemployed off the register and once more boost their fraudulent claims that unemployment continues to fall.

A number of pickets on DHSS offices in Derry and Strabane got a lot of support from furious men and women further humiliated by these ludicrous requirements and aware of the Tories' real scheme. In an attempt to expose the sham of the whole exercise The Derry Unemployed Workers Group (DUWG) and its supporters asked all unemployed people arriving to sign on at Crown Buildings to also sign a letter requesting a job from the DHSS itself and demanding a reply stating that the signatory had been actively seeking work. The DUWG believe that when the DHSS cannot reply effectively or in good time to letters from Derry's 9,000 unemployed, then the Actively Seeking Work order will be discredited.

Spurred on by the extent of the support, the DUWG called for a public meeting in Union Hall to form a committee to win the support of the mass of the working people of Derry.

SHOP-STEWARDS and workers at Packard Electric in Tallaght who had fought long and hard against acceptance of any new "no-strike" clause were disappointed but unbroken at the outcome. In the ballot on 25 Oct. 700 voted for, and 300 against the four year general agreement including a two-year industrial peace clause.

The company made payment of the 2.5% under the National Programme conditional on acceptance. Workers told Class Struggle that not only was there powerful pressure from the company and the Labour Court but that the ICTU representative and Brendan Byrne of the ATGWU also spoke in favour of acceptance.

The bosses have decided to capitalize on the supine collaboration of the trade union leaders demonstrated in their commitment to the Programme for National Recovery.

At the end of September one of the largest workforces in the country, the 10,000 workers of An Post, were targeted for a no-strike agree-

The meeting was addressed by the DUWG organiser and several trade union officials from NUPE, COHSE and the ITGWU. The trade union speakers in particular said they supported the need for a public campaign and pointed to the link between privatization and unemployment, in view of the fact that only recently in Derry the catering services in Altnagelvin hospital had been handed over by the Western Area Health Board to the multi-national Gardner-Merchant with the loss of nearly 300 jobs.

When the meeting was thrown open to the floor an IWG speaker argued that, as the new order is already law, any challenge to discredit it will need a perspective of more than token protest no matter how much support the protest action might mobilize in the short term. He pointed out that in the circumstances of Derry and Strabane the DHSS might well back-pedal before a flood of signed letters but they would not easily abandon their role as the Tories' social policemen.

The IWG argued for the need for a clear perspective for the building of a mass campaign which could unite workplace and communities

in Derry and elsewhere. The key to this, we argued, was the fight to build local committees across the city involving delegates of rank and file workers, shop stewards, and representatives of the unemployed, community groups, tenant associations and political groups. The fight could not only be about this draconian bill but had to offer a challenge to unemployment itself. It must aim to build a fight for industrial action with demands placed upon the trade union leaders but with no illusions or reliance upon these misleaders to act.

Earlier in the week a campaign against privatization of the educational services had been launched which will be drawing upon the same people and the same forces. We argued, therefore, that it was necessary to link both issues as a way of cementing and uniting the actions. In order to democratize the campaign we argued that its representatives should be from all of the trade unions, social, political, community forces present at the meeting, one delegate for each body, while seeking to build further support in their factories, workplaces, committees and so on. A conference should be organised

for a few months ahead of these activists bringing together the two campaigns under a democratic leadership representative of all the local committees of struggle that could be built in the interim.

Without any real debate the proposal to unite both campaigns was not taken up. Similarly, the proposal for nominations for a democratic committee was replaced by a committee formed from anyone who wanted to be part of it. It was further agreed on the proposal of a number of activists for immediate action "to keep the pot boiling and to put further pressure on the DHSS".

Neither of the campaigns launched sees itself going beyond protest action. But the lessons of such a lack of perspective are harsh ones. All the evidence in Derry and across the North generally shows that resistance against the Thatcher's cruel policies on the poor, the sick, the old, the young and the unemployed is growing. A real initiative can get off the ground only if we fight to mobilise workers at the very centre of any campaign. Only this can guarantee a real challenge and the possibility of victory.

IN THE LAST ISSUE of Class Struggle, we said of the imminent expulsion of twelve members of Militant: "These expulsions are Spring's first shots in a war to decimate the ranks of the left in Labour". The proof was not long in coming.

Not only have twelve members of Militant been expelled but the Rathmines branch as a whole has been suspended on the trumped up charges of financial difficulties and inactivity.

The expulsions of Militant and the suspension of the left-wing Rathmines branch should be the signal for a real fightback. What is needed now is an open democratic campaign uniting all who oppose expulsions and suspensions, whether or not they are in the

Labour witch-hunt extends

Labour Party; but taking up the issue throughout the working class, especially in the Labour affiliated unions.

- Stop the Witchhunt
- Re-instate the Militant Twelve
- Lift the Rathmines suspension
- For an open democratic conference to build a real fightback

What is Trotskyism?

IWG Public Meeting Derry. Union Hall. 8pm

November 29th.

TO MARK THE 21ST anniversary of the 1968 Civil Rights march of Oct. 5th, a weekend of lectures and discussions was held in the Union Hall in Derry at the beginning of October. The theme was, in the words of the organizers "The relevance of class to current social, political and historical issues". They hoped that in such a way something of the spirit of the socialism of the initiators of the Civil Rights march might be re-kindled.

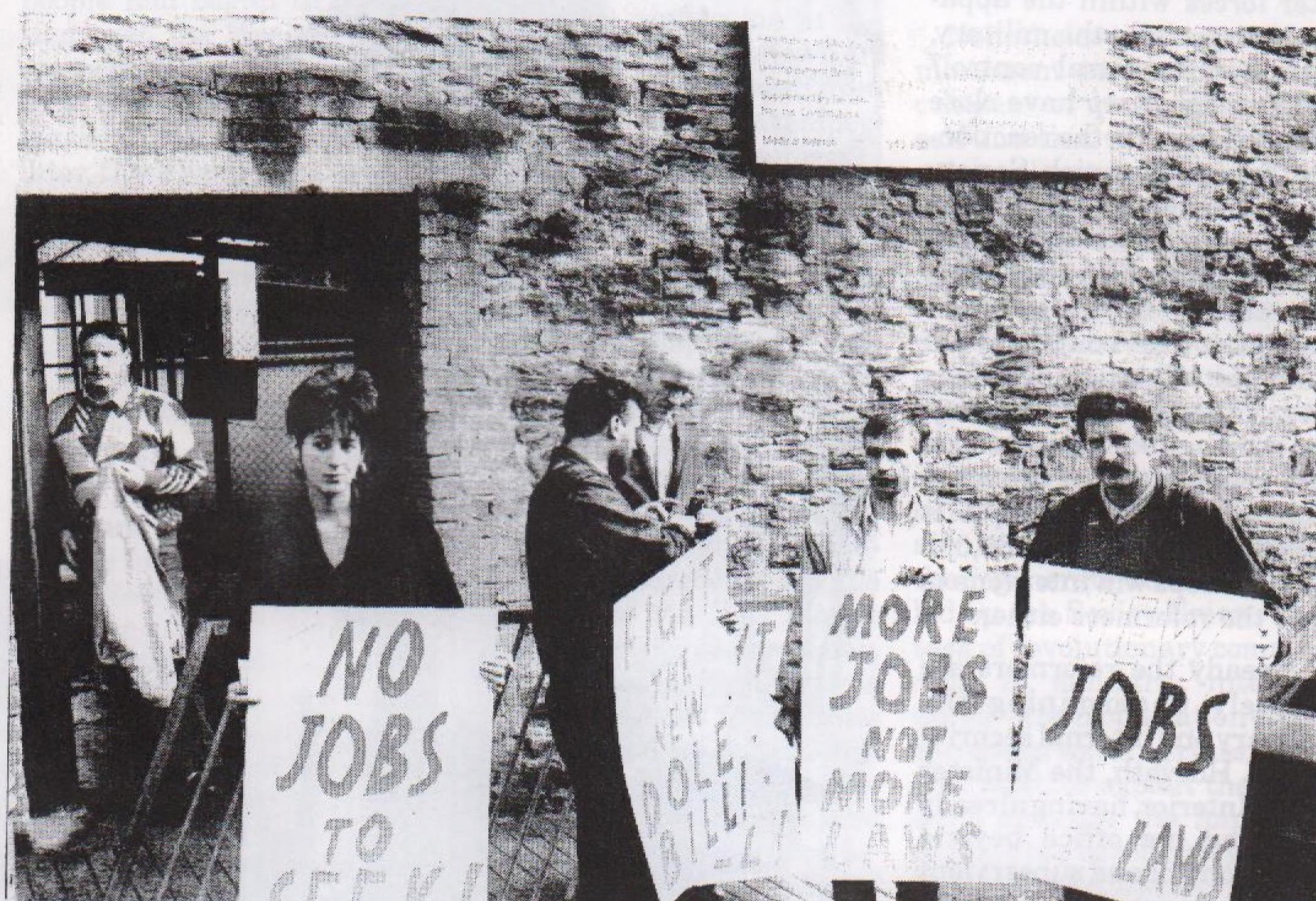
Given that the decision to hold the weekend was only taken six weeks before, it was an undoubted success for the good-sized audiences who turned up.

The opening lecture by Emmet O'Connor, *Labour and Irish Nationalism*, explored what he believed to have been the crucial failure of the labour movement to take up the national question. Eamonn McCann, in his talk, *The IRA—Gunning for Politics*, presented a general outline of

Paddy had been a militant socialist throughout the '30s, '40s and early '50s in Derry and fought a brave if often isolated battle to take up and link all the issues of exploitation and oppression of the Derry working class. In 1946 he was elected as a councillor by the workers of the Bogside, topping the poll with 46% of the vote on a militant socialist programme. It is hoped that Pauline will publish her research on Paddy Fox and any further investigations into political life in Derry.

One of the most interesting events of the weekend was the final speech by Paul Foot, leading member of the Socialist Workers Party in Britain, and author of a recent pamphlet on Ireland (reviewed in the last *Class Struggle*). Foot spoke on the record of the British Labour Party on Ireland, wittily underlining its abysmal pro-imperialist record. Unhappily for Paul Foot, an IWG speaker drew attention to his own pamphlet which fell somewhat short of

a genuine anti-imperialist position. In it, he pointed out, Foot describes the IRA cam-



Pickets at Derry's Crown Buildings protesting at "Actively Seeking Work" test.

Packard and An Post

ment. A memorandum was passed to the union leaders of the PTWU and CPSU and the other smaller unions putting the proposals, but the membership were not informed.

Even union committee members in An Post branches had not seen the proposals by the end of October. Yet the limited-circulation bourgeois journal *Industrial Relations News* could report on 5th October that "It is understood that the PTWU's view is that while the peace clause could be acceptable in its own right, certain issues—such as pay—would have to be sorted out".

The danger is that bureaucrats Begg and O'Dowd have already decided on railroading this rotten sell-out through their unions. In the An Post CPSU branch, committee members who canvassed for a "no" vote against a productivity deal were attacked. CPSU head office had pressured the committee into recommending that deal to

FIGHT THE NO-STRIKE DEALS!

members (by 9 to 7) and they now insist in effect that the minority on the branch committee should have led to their members and said they supported the recommendation.

New standing orders have been pushed through to impose on activists a spurious "collective responsibility" to prevent members being canvassed by their own elected representatives with any of the arguments against committee "recommendations".

Where "collective responsibility" should apply is in the fight against the bosses, not as a trick

to deny democracy to the members. The real offenders against "collective responsibility" are union bureaucrats who work to set up a sell-out of the right to strike, behind the backs of the members, and then use all their bureaucratic power to pressure them into acceptance.

A fighting committee of activists from all unions in An Post must be set up urgently to mobilize to prevent any sell-out on the right to strike. ■

argued, was at odds with the Marxist view of arm-ed struggle as a tactic. Members of the Republican movement and others present engaged him in a lively discussion, but with few concrete conclusions.

Terry Eagleton, philosopher and author of a recent play about Oscar Wilde, spoke on *Marxism and Civil Rights*. Though undoubtedly too demanding as a scholarly exercise in political philosophy for many in his large audience, Eagleton emphasized the need for Marxists to have a theory about the place of the individual and an idea of how self-fulfillment can be achieved within the collective community of socialism.

Probably the most interesting contribution of the weekend was by Pauline McClenaghan on the life of Derry socialist Paddy Fox.

Debate in Derry

campaign throughout as "terrorism" and calls for the British Government to organize a constitutional conference as the eventual basis for a pull-out. The IWG speaker demanded of Foot how he could square this with the claim of the SWP and SWM that only the mass organization of the Irish working class can drive out British imperialism. Foot did not explain.

An spirited exchange ensued, illustrating for many the value of such debate and discussion for the clarification of political differences around matters of principle, strategy and tactics. It is hoped that the Derry initiative will bear fruit with further debate and discussion in the coming year as a preparation for a large and more successful weekend next year. ■

Will Hungary restore Capitalism?

The 1,000 plus delegates of the ruling Hungarian Socialist Workers Party (HSWP) voted last October to dissolve their party.

At first sight, the "truly amazing move towards a multi-party democracy" by the Stalinist bureaucracy (in the words of the *Economist Information Unit*) seem extraordinary: a plurality of parties, freely contested elections in 1990 with no reserved places, hymns to capitalism and the market. The hundreds of thousands of party members and state officials, with all their privileges amassed over 40 years on the basis of a bureaucratically mismanaged economy, seem intent on throwing it all away. Or do they? What is really happening?

For the last ten years at least Hungary has lurched from economic crisis to crisis. During the early 1980s the mounting debt problems were addressed by a draconian austerity programme which cut earnings and spending in order to improve financial balances. But few structural changes were made in the economy in terms of ownership. Stagnation and mounting debt re-emerged again in 1986.

"Work Harder"

Now the crisis is of chronic proportions. Hard currency earnings on exports barely cover interest payments on the \$17.8bn external debt. National income was stagnant this year and last and is predicted to grow only at 0.2% p.a. in the next few years. State investment has fallen by nearly 10% in the last decade. Inflation is running at 15% and rising. Meanwhile it is common for people to hold down two or three jobs to make ends meet and still 20% of the population are officially below the poverty line.

All this has served to discredit the advocates of command planning. As in the USSR the exhortation to "work harder" now fails to address the depth of the problem. The hand of the radical reformers has been strengthened: no-one has a coherent rational alternative within the ruling bureaucracy to the full headlong flight to embrace capitalism.

But the reformers are not stupid. The likes of Posgay and Nemeth within the leadership of the newly launched Hungarian Socialist Party (HSP) recognize that if time has finally caught up with them and revealed their historical illegitimacy as a caste, then they must use their remaining power to position themselves to take advantage of a capitalist Hungary. This is what the reform project from above is all about.

The first task is to hold on to political power for as long as

possible so that sections of the bureaucracy can effect the transition to a capitalist class. For this they must be seen taking the initiative in the reforms and not let the non-party opposition steal the march. As a discredited force in Hungarian society and faced with cynicism about talk of change, the party has to be far-reaching and fast in its proposals if it is to stand a chance of retaining any credibility. If Posgay is to win the Presidential election (Nov '89) and if the HSP are to form a major part of a coalition government next spring, then nothing else will suffice.

Let there be no mistake about the aims of this section of the bureaucracy. They want to restore capitalism so that they can benefit as a comprador semi-colonial bourgeoisie in alliance with western imperialism. Posgay speaks for the thousands of company managers who want to be free to get their hands on western capital and free themselves of obsolete plant and excess workers. These layers, as a result of years of market reforms in Hungary, are already richer than any state functionary. But the family ties are already extensive within this and other sections of private entrepreneurial capital inside the country. The Posgays of this world intend to use the new laws to direct as much as possible of the new broken-up state property to their families, their associates and themselves.

The commercial banks, the boards of directors of the new joint stock companies and the insurance combines are the intended refuge for the bureaucracy. Those that do not get these positions can look forward to enjoying the patronage of this layer, acting as their parliamentary representatives and civil servants.

Corruption in this field is already rife. In January this year the League of Young Communists bought conference centres and recreational facilities galore for pennies from the state as part of the privatization process. This huge real estate is thus transformed from the object of privileged use by the ruling caste into potentially very valuable hereditary wealth in the hands of the sons and daughters of the bureaucracy.

Who Will Oppose Posgay?

But who is ranged against the social-democratizing Posgay within the HSP? There are formidable opponents and quite large in numbers, since Posgay could only rely upon 30% of the votes at the October Congress. There are first of all the less radical reformers led by General Secretary Grosz. Behind him stand the hard-line Stalinists, led by Robert Ribanszki's Marxist

Unity Platform. Their opposition and growing desperation stems from the fact that not all the present bureaucrats can find a place in the sun in a future semi-colonial Hungary. Massive state budget reductions, huge cuts in the state bureaucracy and military (inevitable in the transition to capitalism) spell doom for hundreds of thousands of privileged parasites.

But their weakness comes from the obvious fact they have no alternative to Posgay in the realm of economic policy. They recognize this weakness and for the moment they prefer to stay in the belly of the beast of the new HSP rather than split and reform the HSWP as even Grosz has threatened. This is their current chosen method of subverting and delaying the social-democratization of the Stalinist party and the dismantling of the Stalinist state apparatus.

Military Intervention?

Can they marshal more sinister forces within the apparatus, especially the military, to re-assert central control? Ribanszki's group have close connections with the reactionary Ferenc Munnich Society and the Friends of the Workers Guard (the old HSWP party militia). Can they bring the terror of Tiananmen Square to the boulevards of Budapest? This is by no means clear. The Hungarian army, ever since 1956, has been a less reliable tool of the state than in Poland for example. It seems unlikely that the 65,000 USSR troops will intervene to stop the reformers either.

Already the reformers are actively undermining the military and internal security police. Horvath, the Minister of the Interior, having already declared his office beyond party control and subservient to parliament, has cut back the budget and duties of the Workers Guard as well as removing leading figures in the police force this June.

Outside the ranks of the HSP are up to 30,000 organized oppositionists in a myriad of groups. The largest, the Democratic Forum stands for a free market but embraces social democrats and liberals. They are angry that they have had their policies stolen by the HSP reform wing. But the general disaffection with anyone associated with the old HSWP may well see them rise to challenge the HSP for a leading role in government.

The *Economist* reported recently that "Hungary's image as the pioneer reformer in Eastern Europe is attracting considerable interest among Western banks and businesses". This is hardly surprising when one considers that the bureaucrats have just sold these same banks a 49%

stake in Tungsram, probably the most successful of Hungarian companies. Moreover, if they are unable to sell the shares on the stock market within three years the Hungarian government will reimburse them everything!

Australia is lining up the brewing industry and Canada the chemical plants. Many others are on the imperialists' shopping list. But if the banks are to be kept interested and go beyond the stage of a couple of hundred joint ventures, Hungary needs to cross the Rubicon. The Bankruptcy Law would have to be rigorously implemented. The loss-making companies which climbed from 179 to 282 last year would have to be allowed to go to the wall. Indeed, this is all allowed for in the new three-year plan to start in 1990.

A menu of privatization and liberalization has been cooked up. Already the provisions for starting up limited liability private companies and transferring state assets to them has been simplified. In 1991 the country will switch to hard currency accounting in trade, in an attempt to attract foreign capital. After that will come at least partial convertibility of the forint. If to this one adds the plan for a stock market (an essential element in the process since it implies the free movement of capital) and Hungary is on target for the full conversion back to the capitalist law of value several

Hungarian political revolution 1956, waged by workers' councils, not by bureaucratic 'reformers', until it was crushed by Stalinist tanks.



dards, social stratification and disunity within the working class will be awesome. Some are vaguely aware of this but are resigned to this fate as the cost of having failed to build socialism. In the November Presidential elections Posgay and the Democratic Forum candidate will, in their own ways, seek to take advantage of this mood. The former promises a miserly welfare capitalism, while the opposition just promise capitalism and parliamentary democracy.

Workers' Answer

Hungarian workers must renounce both roads to the restoration of exploitation. They must vote for neither, for there is no need to endure this scenario. There is an alternative to both the bureaucratic command economy and to capitalist slavery. The working class must seize hold of the real heritage of the 1956 uprising to which the deceitful reformers are laying claim. The actual record of the reformers in 1956 was support for one wing of the despotic bureaucracy, around Imre Nagy. The workers must remember instead that in 1956 it was only the workers' councils that threatened to overthrow the whole parasitic bureaucracy and radically transform the plan. That remains the task—to make the economic plan the tool of the toilers in the march to socialism rather than plan of their oppression and alienation. ■

East German policeman in 1953

IN LESS than a month the new opposition movement had brought about the fall of one of the most powerful and entrenched Stalinist leaders opposed to the Gorbachev wave of 'reform'.

For the first time since the brutally crushed workers' uprising of 1953 the masses of workers have taken to the streets in the economically most advanced of the Stalinist states. Unlike Poland, their sharpest grievances are not economic; nor is the opposition raising the cry for a return to capitalism. Symbolically, large sections of workers have sung the Internationale at their demonstrations.

Approximately 30,000 East Germans emigrate to West Germany every year. They go with their government's blessing as part of an inter-governmental deal which gives the GDR a DM 4 billion hidden subsidy and advantageous access to the European Community markets via West Germany. The deal itself underlines the mutually beneficial hypocrisy of both regimes. The Bonn government has a steady supply of skilled labour and the propaganda advantage of pointing to the prison-like nature of "Communist Germany" while the Stalinists in Berlin can maintain a prosperous economy in the short-sighted belief that this will be enough to buy the loyalty of "their" population.

The "refugee crisis" did not have a single cause, it developed as different factors, initially unconnected, began to interact. For example, last year, Hungary, as part of its pro-capitalist reform programme, opened its frontier with Austria for its own citizens. Hungary is an extremely popular destination for holiday-makers from the GDR but an agreement between Hungary and the GDR prevented them from crossing the border with Austria. They could only go to another "socialist" state.

At the same time, the Soviet Union, for similar reasons, opened its borders to "ethnic Germans" wanting to emigrate to West Germany. Several hundred thousand took advantage of this immediately and the total now is well over one million. In June of this year, Bonn, under pressure from the extreme Right-wing Republikaner, announced moves to limit the amount of financial and social support these "refugees" were entitled to.

FOR THE WORKERS' REPUBLIC OF GERMANY!

OF ALL THE fast-moving changes in Eastern Europe the most important are those in the German Democratic Republic (GDR). The very existence of the state is both symbol and lynchpin of the post-war European order. Anything that affects East German stability automatically threatens that order. This has been dramatically highlighted by the development, and consequences, of the 'refugee crisis'. The fact that, initially, a few thousand East German holidaymakers in Hungary wanted to enter Austria, en route for West Germany, has inexorably brought in its train major divisions within the Warsaw Pact, a mass-based reform movement and a change of government leadership in East Germany, divisions within the West German coalition and a good deal of suspicion and political manoeuvring within the EC. Here we examine the development of the crisis and the issues posed.

arrival, but at the same time, stressed that East Germans, who have automatic citizenship in the West, would continue to receive full benefits.

Within the GDR itself, many people had begun to believe that even the Honecker government would have to move into line with Gorbachev's *glasnost* and that, sooner or later, there would be a relaxation that would make flight to the West unnecessary. However, these hopes were cruelly dashed when Honecker explicitly supported the massacre of the democracy movement in Tiananmen Square in June.

This coincided with the Bonn statement that East Germans would continue to receive full citizenship. Many East Germans in Hungary demanded to be allowed to cross into Austria although they had no visas to do this. This demand was taken up by Bonn which saw in the situation a way of testing how far Hungary could be pushed to side with the West against an ally in the Warsaw Pact.

When Hungary obligingly opened its borders, Chancellor Kohl of West Germany seized the opportunity to upstage his right-wing opponents by emphasizing his government's long-term commitment to re-unification of Germany and the absurdity of East Germans having to travel via Hungary and Austria to reach the other side of The Wall. His immediate objective, however, was, and remains, increasing the pressure on the East German government to introduce the pro-capitalist restoration reforms already pioneered by Poland and Hungary.

Nonetheless, even the suggestion of a future re-united Germany caused hearts to flutter amongst West Germany's allies. DeLors, for example, has been vigorously insisting that the question should only be considered after the consolidation of a really

united European Community because he fears unilateral German expansion into the whole of Eastern Europe, as does Andreotti of Italy. Indeed, the West German bourgeoisie itself is wary of the implications of re-unification in the short term as was shown by Kohl's distancing himself from Genscher's recent intemperate remarks on the subject.

East German Opposition

Far more importantly, the greatly increased pressure on the East German government revived hopes within the opposition movement that change had become unavoidable. This was given organizational expression in the founding of the New Forum movement in September. Ironically, as in China, it was Gorbachev's visit to celebrate the anniversary of the founding of the state which provided a focus for a huge public demonstration of support for radical reform, primarily of the political system.

Gennady Gerasimov, who accompanied Gorbachev, has recently explained that the Soviet leader's main message had been that "sometimes you have to change in order to catch up". We can imagine that this was put more bluntly in reality since any suggestion of a repetition of Tiananmen on the Alexanderplatz would inevitably mean massive social strife and probably direct confrontation with the Western Allies. This, the Kremlin simply would not allow. The fall of Honecker, already on the cards, was sealed by that meeting.

In what has become the traditional Stalinist manner, he was replaced by the former head of security, Egon Krenz, in a move that only underlines the gulf between the leaders and the opposition. The unceremonious dumping of Honecker, however, has encouraged the growing ranks

of oppositionists willing to demonstrate on the streets. The regime holds very few cards that it can play; the more indecisive and uncertain it appears the more confidence the opposition will gain.

Nonetheless, the opposition movement is not politically coherent or homogeneous itself and this will be revealed as a weakness precisely at the point where the regime begins visibly to collapse. The problems of East Germany cannot be solved by "dialogue" and the issues raised by a government crisis could never be contained within the borders even of both German states. What is at stake is the balance of forces, internationally, between imperialism and the degenerate workers' states led by the Soviet Union. The task of revolutionary communists is, similarly, international—the mobilization of the European working class, East and West, to exploit the divisions amongst the imperialists and the bankruptcy of the Stalinists and to assert its own independent interests.

German Re-Unification

Because of its historic origins, all political questions of any importance in the GDR eventually lead back to the question of the existence and legitimacy of the state itself. The German "National Question" is now posed pointblank. Revolutionaries do not accept the right of the Stalinists and the imperialists to enforce the division of Germany. However, the consequences of that division have included the creation of a degenerate workers' state in the GDR, with the property forms necessary for building socialism in the future. We therefore oppose the re-imposition of capitalism, irrespective of the means by which it was destroyed.

For decades, the question of the re-unification of Germany has been largely a concern of the extreme Right in German

politics. To the extent that the German Left equated the question itself with the Nazis' solution to it, they allowed the Right to present themselves as the sole defenders of the integrity of the German nation. This was an error not only because of the advantage it gave the Right but because it effectively allowed the Stalinists to set the political agenda on the question.

The problem is best summed up by its most emotive symbol, the Berlin Wall. Until it was built, in 1961, there was a constant drain of up to 200,000 people a year from the GDR to the Federal Republic (FRG). This entailed a serious loss of skilled labour and was accompanied by illegal currency dealings which undermined the stability of the East German mark. Its construction was a classically Stalinist answer to the problem of disaffection amongst the workers—lock them up.

Workers' Social Gains

In its own way it did defend the post-capitalist system in the East and economic progress was accelerated after it was built. However, even its "success" reveals the deeply contradictory nature of such a Stalinist state. Police surveillance and repression of any possible dissent naturally led to working class hostility and, to put it mildly, lack of enthusiasm. To offset this, the government has created a system of social security and state subsidies probably more lavish than in any other state in the world. Consequently, unlike many other degenerate workers' states, dissent is not fueled by economic hardship but by opposition to the all-pervasive interference of the state in the lives of its citizens.

To add to the contradictory picture, the cost of benefits and subsidies was partly offset by western credit and preferential access to the EC. Now, with many Comecon enterprises allowed to deal directly with imperialist suppliers, much of this advantage is disappearing and the GDR has to find ways of reducing costs and increasing productivity. The writing, so to speak, is on The Wall.

Workers' Revolution

The programme of political revolution in the GDR will differ from that in other degenerate workers' states in two important respects. Firstly, at the present time, the mobilizing potential of its democratic aspects will be greater than those of a more immediately economic nature. The right to form political organizations, the right to publish and circulate material freely, the right of access to the mass media in general are already widespread demands. Revolutionaries must link them to the methods of working class organization and mobilization and, above all, of workers' control, to enforce them. Democratic demands can also be utilized to accelerate the break-up of the Stalinist party, whose "Socialist Unity" can only be maintained by its ban on factions and free speech among its members.

For all that it is one of the ten most prosperous econo-

mies in the world, the GDR is going to face economic difficulties in the coming period. As these arise revolutionaries must campaign for working class action not only to defend subsidies and jobs but to assert control, inspection and veto over every level of the economy, from the factory to the national plan itself.

Secondly, the "National Question" is posed both more directly, and in a far more complicated way, in Germany than anywhere else. Because of their pivotal position in Europe, the German peoples have been denied their right to self-determination throughout history by the neighbouring Great Powers. Communists cannot undo history and do not need to idealize abstractions. For us German re-unification has to be posed in class terms—is it to be achieved to the advantage of the working class or the capitalists?

Re-unification under capitalist control would mean the destruction of the gains the working class of East Germany presently enjoys and the re-establishment of a formidable German imperialism whose needs could only be satisfied by the reduction of at least Eastern Europe to the status of semi-colonies. Communists oppose that. However, a re-unification against capitalism, the combined overthrow of the Stalinists of the GDR and the imperialists of the FRG, would be a massive blow to the twin enemies of the world working class—the Kremlin and the White House. It would be inconceivable without a revolutionary restructuring of the whole of Europe and, for that reason, would be opposed by all the established states and would have to call on the support of the whole European working class.

The revolutionary resolution of the National Question, therefore, lies at the heart of the revolutionary programme in both parts of Germany. Far from being down-played or dismissed as a Nazi fantasy it should be championed as the key to the European Revolution!

The most important aspect of the National Question is the re-unification of the German working class. Revolutionaries must agitate and propagandise

- for the right of working class organizations to build across the border at every level, from factory to national party and trade unions;
- for the right of free access to all parts of both states for the workers of both states;
- for the right to take solidarity action with workers across the border;
- for the opening of the books of companies and the states to reveal the true extent of cross-border collaboration between Stalinists and imperialists;
- for the opening of the archives of both states to reveal the secrets of their security police and the involvement of the Nazis in the consolidation of power in the Forties;
- for the expulsion of foreign troops from both states;
- for workers' councils and a workers' militia throughout Germany and the convocation of an all-German Congress of Workers' Councils.

THE ABORTION debate erupted last month because of the courageous action of student leaders in risking imprisonment by publishing information on pregnancy options.

At mass demonstration of students outside the Four Courts during the hearing sought by SPUC, Labour's Emmet Stagg addressed the crowd by saying that "the matter must now be taken up by the politicians". Fine words indeed from the man who couldn't bring himself to sign a Defend the Clinics Campaign list of prominent individuals prepared to defy the ban by offering information themselves!

An IWG speaker argued in support of the student resistance but pointed out that if the issue was to be confronted and a political challenge offered, then the campaign would have to confront the legal provisions that criminalise abortion referral in the first place. This means repealing the 1861 Act and the Eighth Amendment to the constitution. He challenged Stagg, if he and his party were serious, to introduce bills in the Dáil towards bringing about these legal changes. Only if the student campaign set out to mobilize organized workers alongside them, however, could fundamental democratic rights be defended and ex-

tended. The next day at a mass meeting in TCD attended by Labour TDs Stagg and Quinn, Stagg stated that he believed the legal issues should now be raised "in the Women's Committee in the Dáil"—a recipe if ever we heard one for consigning it to oblivion!

SPUC's case was subsequently thrown out of court by Ms. Justice Carroll on the grounds that newspaper reports were not proof of contempt by the student leaders or their unions. Carroll represents a wing of the bourgeoisie who have not much sympathy with the antics of SPUC; nor much stomach for a fight with the students. Her referral of the matter to the European Court is nothing but the delaying tactic of those forces who are not unanimous about how to proceed against SPUC.

Unexpected Result

This unexpected result has been understandably greeted with enthusiasm by campaign activists. However, on closer examination, the ruling is nowhere near a victory. Firstly, SPUC have already appealed to the Supreme Court (due for hearing on Nov. 28th) where they may see the decision overturned.

Secondly, even if European court were to rule in favour of the right to abortion information, the Irish government

Abortion Information 'Victory'?

could derogate from the ruling under the terms of the Single European Act—unless they come under the pressure of a mobilized campaign fighting for repeal of the law and the constitution.

In the meantime, abortion referral is still criminalised in Ireland. At some point in the future SPUC is going to come to court with a watertight case and inevitably the judiciary will eventually cave in. Self-congratulation is no substitute for facing up to these facts.

But instead of recognising this reality, the USI leaders are responsible for letting the campaign die. Arally that was planned for November 8th has now been light-mindedly redirected to the issue of grants. It was only possible for the student leaders to call off the campaign because they had succeeded in deliberately limiting its perspectives to

"freedom of information", deliberately avoiding any mention of the laws against abortion on which the courts based their attack on abortion information.

The IWG fought from the start against for a perspective that would consciously target those laws and mobilize against them. The centrist left and student leaders opposed our arguments all the way. Trailing behind the spontaneous action of the students, refusing to give a lead, the centrist left groups believed the setback for SPUC would give new confidence to the campaign. Instead, having no perspective beyond the immediate, the campaign was demobilized in self-congratulation.

Activists will argue that the battle still goes on in the form of maintaining the illegal information services. Certainly, distribution of information helps meet a partial need of women but it does not engage the enemy in the kind of focussed action around which we can build real resistance and defence. Notwithstanding the dedication of the forces behind the illegal networks, in reality they are banking on

evading any real need to confront and defy the legal attacks by secrecy and by keeping a low profile.

This defeatism will be viewed by SPUC as a signal to intensify its attacks. Only recently, SPUCites have succeeded in influencing the Irish Censorship Board's decision to ban Cosmopolitan magazine unless it withdraws its advertising of abortion referral telephone numbers.

It is pointless to run away from the real political issues that face us. The view of USI is one that dangerously underestimates the enemy and the need to organise firmly to defend those services that do exist as well as laying the basis of a fight to make abortion information and counselling legal again. To settle for anything less is to condemn Irish women to a semi-legal twilight zone where their basic democratic rights are constantly under threat.

Now is the time to stand and fight. Failure to do so will only lead to running battles with SPUC. Those activists who have come to see the necessity of mounting a challenge to the law must take the initiative now in building, however small initially, a campaign for de-criminalisation of abortion counselling and of abortion itself.

It must have the explicit aims of mobilizing students and the working class for defiance of the law, defence of those attacked through the courts, and especially for repeal of the 1861 Act and removal of the 8th Amendment. Such a campaign would be strategically placed to offer an alternative way forward if and when the USI leaders

duck the legal issues once again, when SPUC, as it inevitably must, returns to the fray.

Only by beginning now to build such a campaign which will turn itself outwards towards women and the labour movement can we smash the SPUC offensive once and for all.

Gains by SPUC

Students in University College Galway voted in a referendum on Oct 25th against distributing abortion information. This vote was a victory for SPUC. (Galway students in the neighbouring Regional Technical College, however, voted in support of the USI campaign.)

The UCG union had disaffiliated under right-wing officers from the Union of Students in Ireland last year. Their decision in favour of a vote by referendum rather than by open debate and show of hands at a Union General Meeting was intended to favour SPUC who make this demand in all the colleges.

But crucially, SPUC directly addressed the issue of abortion while the anti-SPUC students foolishly tried to avoid it, claiming that the issue was nothing more than freedom of information.

SPUC will try to capitalize on its victory in UCG. In doing so it will be fighting for referenda in other campuses. This must be opposed with a defence of the open democracy of debate and voting at a collective meeting of the students. But the issue of abortion itself cannot continue to be dodged by student leaders if SPUC is to be driven back. ■



SPUC demo at Dáil in 1980

Is abortion murder?

AT THE present moment in a number of countries moves to erode abortion rights are being stepped up by religious fundamentalists and cranks of all sorts. In Ireland the spearhead of this movement is the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child.

The essence of SPUC's opposition to abortion is their assertion that the fertilised egg, embryo or foetus is a human person. The major plank of their 'case' consists of showing magnified photographs of an aborted foetus, emphasising the visual likeness of the foetus to the child.

This tactic is plainly designed to shock the emotions into a sense of revulsion from abortion. It cannot demonstrate that the foetus is a child. The presence of a heartbeat, a circulatory system and brain tissue is, then, put forward as proof that the foetus must be considered a person.

When one considers that all mammal foetuses have these organs it becomes clear that

their presence does not necessarily mean that a foetus is in any way a person. Every developed animal has these organs, yet we do not consider that a monkey, a cat or a dog is a person.

SPUC argues that the foetus can feel pain and therefore has developed emotions which denote its humanity. This argument, too, is utterly false. The foetal brain can respond to a stimulus but it is not developed enough to interpret that stimulus as pain, pleasure or anything else. That is the scientific evidence.

The argument that the foetus is a human person is derived not from the findings of any scientific research but is based on religious belief and theological dogma. Those who claim to prove that the foetus is a person start with this assumption and work back to 'prove' it with whatever comes to hand.

In their view, women are expected to forfeit the right to control their own bodies—a

right that is vitally necessary to determine their own destiny—to the needs of a collection of foetal cells. SPUC's case reflects their determination to reduce women to mere reproductive machines, who, on occasion, will be expected to surrender even their very lives to realise the potential life of the foetus.

It is worth noting, finally, that while SPUC & Co vehemently maintains that the foetus is a human person, when it comes down to practice they regard it as something less than that! Does the Catholic church, for instance, have a death rite for the miscarried foetus? Similarly the Irish state, despite upholding the Catholic view that life begins with the fertilisation of the egg, does not require a death certificate when a foetus is aborted or miscarried.

So how do we define a person and when ought it to have rights? For us the answer is clear. A foetus becomes a person with rights when it is born and when it enters into social life. Up till that point all rights belong to the person whose body the foetus is part of—the mother.

As murder is defined as the deliberate act of taking the life of a person, and since the foetus is clearly not a person, the claim that abortion is murder is ludicrous. ■

Why we fight for Free Abortion on demand

THE FIERCE opposition of SPUC, the Church and state to any attempt by women to liberate themselves is no mere irrationality or prejudice. It reflects their commitment to the capitalist social order and those institutions that are vital to its maintenance.

In this respect, women's role within the family is the means whereby the labour force is replenished, rested, clothed etc. and where future generations of workers are born, reared and prepared for exploitation. The majority of this work is done by the unpaid domestic toil of women. This is true even for those who also work outside the home. It is a service women provide for capitalism free of charge.

Herein lies the root of the capitalist system's opposition to abortion and its alliance with the Catholic church in Ireland. Reduced to being mere servants of home and family and to being victims of their biological functions, women are all the more easily oppressed both ideologically and in practice.

By condemning women to unpaid toil within the family unit, their divorce from social production and isolation from the trade union and labour movement is copper-fastened. Even when employed, women are generally the lowest paid, least skilled and least secure

in their jobs. In such a way deep divisions are sustained between working class men and women—a division fatal to the need for unity our our class faced with the ravages of capitalism.

To win for women the unfettered right to control their own fertility, the fight for women's democratic rights—for divorce, equal pay, proper sex education, the separation of church and state—is, therefore, a key part of the struggle to bring women fully into productive life as part of the working class fight for unity to overthrow capitalism.

VULNERABLE

The fact that women in Ireland have very restricted rights to control their own fertility has meant that they are more chained to the home, more dependent on males; it has meant also that they are less able to fully involve themselves in social and political life.

This explains why they are especially vulnerable to the emotional blackmail of the Church and state, particularly when the issue of women's rights is raised. The question of abortion goes right to the heart of the struggle for women's emancipation.

The Irish Workers Group argues for free and legal abortion on demand. This in no way implies persuading

any woman to have an abortion. What it does mean is that any woman who needs or wishes to have an abortion should have access to one paid for by the state. It recognises that there is no absolutely safe and sure method of contraception and that no woman willingly wants to be in a situation where abortion is her only option. The demand for free and legal abortion gives a woman the right to choose a pregnancy she wants and will cherish, a pregnancy that is not a compulsory drudgery but a joyous and creative act, a pregnancy where every child is a wanted child.

In supporting abortion we demand that it be legal so that women no longer risk imprisonment. We demand that it be free because only in such a way will it be accessible to the poorer sections of the population. Wealthy women have little difficulty in obtaining terminations which are carried out under proper medical supervision in private clinics. Working class women, on the contrary, have always faced the terrifying choice of suffering unwanted pregnancies or having a backstreet abortion.

We stand for the woman's unconditional right to choose. Anything less is to take that decision out of her hands—to make civil servants, politicians, priests and doctors the people who decide for her. ■

"The IRSP have not broken out of the limits of republicanism socialism and left nationalism. Any attempt to launch a party around a party a party on its present basis will once in end in disaster". (Class Struggle 1988 p. 7).

IN THE no. 6 edition of 'Starry Plough', the Irish Republican Socialist Party (IRSP) group carried a long article devoted to an examination of the Marxism attitude to violence and internationalism.

The article was polemically aimed at what its author, Seamus Morgan, called the "critics of armed struggle in Ireland", of whom it singled out the Communist Party of Ireland (CPI) and Socialist Workers Movement (SWM), because "between them they contain most of the criticism directed against the armed struggle". It was also aimed in a more general way at the British left and its similar criticisms and resulting failure of internationalist duty.

The IRSP article is largely devoted to a rambling argument that "internationalism" means no criticism of the armed struggle of the IRA and INLA by socialists in Britain or in Ireland, criticism which is a cowardly capitulation to chauvinism in Britain or reformism in Ireland.

MARX AND ENGELS

Morgan attempts to use the examples of Marx and Engels, Lenin and Trotsky to justify this. With regard to Marx he informs us, correctly, that while having voiced private criticism of the violent acts of the Fenian bombers in Britain in 1867, Marx refrained from public criticism. Morgan states:

These were private letters and they did not plaster their publications with condemnations like some opportunists like the SWP and others have done over the years. They took the line that actions like these were an unavoidable consequence of the violence of oppressed people. (Starry Plough, p.7)

Without for a moment defending the SWP in Britain, this is gibberish. Surely someone in the IRSP knows that Marx's reason for not making the criticism public was because in 1867 the dominant forces in Ireland materially and politically were the bourgeoisie. The Irish proletariat was still in its infancy, politically not yet born, and thus could play no part in the struggle for its own distinctive class interest against native capitalism or British colonialism. Marx and Engels' 'internationalism' concretely related to these circumstances—the fight against the chauvinism of British workers and support for the struggle of the Fenians in their call for self-determination. If successful, Marx hoped that the class struggle against the exploiter in both countries would be enormously developed.

But having ignored or suppressed all of this, Morgan is forced to even greater distortions. For in order to sustain his belief that Marx and Engels' historically conditioned position established the general line for all subsequent

revolutionary Marxists, he has to ignore the unique contributions of Lenin to the national question.

LENIN

Morgan states that Lenin was 'the true interpreter' of Marx and Engels' internationalism. Absolutely correct! But not because he slavishly followed them. Rather he developed their principles for a new context—the epoch of imperialism.

Formerly the main thing was to fight against Tsarism and for the greater revolutionary peoples of the West; the main thing today is to stand against the united aligned front of the imperialist bourgeoisie and the social imperialists; and for the utilisation of all national movements against imperialism for the purpose of socialist revolution. (The discussion of self-determination summed up. July 1916).

Lenin had gradually come to see that the existence of imperialism meant an end to the idea that backward nations could simply follow the historical pattern of the advanced. Imperialism intensified national antagonisms and oppressions, and movements of national liberation broke out in the colonies and semi-colonies. The proletariat had to support these struggles. Revolutionary communist parties had to participate in and seek to lead them, fighting with the methods of the class struggle for the widest mobilisation of the toiling masses leading to mass armed insurrection. Involved here was the perspective of Permanent Revolution. The national struggles had to be taken up as an integral part of the class struggle in the imperialist epoch. They were now part of the international proletarian revolution.

On the basis of this analysis, Lenin developed the slogan "unconditional but critical support" as the principled tactic for communists in the imperialised nations by which they should relate to genuine national movements. From the point of view of communists in the oppressor nation, the major task remained that of combating chauvinism in the working class. They did so, Lenin argued, by the principled unconditional defense of the right of the oppressed nation to use whatever means they choose against its oppressor. A mass working class movement had to be built on such a basis. Genuine public criticism of the counter-productive tactics and methods of the oppressed struggle which proved an obstacle to these goals, had to be strictly subordinated to defence. Criticism was not meant, as is the case of the SWP in Britain, to distance the communist from 'terrorism' but as a means of clarifying the programme for workers in the imperialist countries.

Despite lengthy quotes from Lenin, there is not the slightest mention of these key points and their significance in Morgan's account. Nor, even more significantly, the application of Lenin's position for the task of communists in the oppressed nation. We can best illustrate this singular omission in reference to Morgan's attempt to address the Marx-

THE IRSP AND ARMED STRUGGLE

A Travesty of Marxism



ist position violence. According to him the left opponents of the armed struggle in Ireland invariably quote from Lenin and Trotsky, but out of the context in which their words are written. As we have seen already Morgan is no mean operator in this regard!

INDIVIDUAL TERRORISM

According to Morgan, Lenin's correct criticism of the 'individual terrorism' of the populist movement in Russia in the late nineteenth century, is wrongly applied by the left in Ireland to criticism of the armed struggle here. This is a grotesque and ignorant lie. Of all the far left in Ireland ie. the 'Trotskyist' left—only the Militant group use this as a way of characterising the IRA armed struggle. No serious anti-imperialist in Ireland could deny the fact that the republican movement has a mass base within a section of the anti-unionist masses, albeit a minority. The IRA are an irregular nationalist army conducting a guerrilla war. Revealingly, again, Morgan nowhere refers to Lenin's writings on guerrilla warfare in order to explore the way in which revolutionary communists should view such warfare and violence generally.

As we have said, Morgan is aware that Lenin criticised the 'individual terrorism' of the Narodniks in Russia in the nineteenth century because they were divorced from the masses and because their actions bore no relation to their economic and social conditions and the struggles

that sprang from them. Writing in 1906, however, in the context of the spontaneous mass strikes, struggles and armed guerilla conflict that had increasingly developed in tempo, culminating in the 1905 Revolution, Lenin had this to say;

Marxism differs from all primitive forms of socialism by not binding the movement to any one particular form of struggle. It recognises the most varied forms of struggle and it does not concoct them; but only generalises and organises, gives conscious expression to these forms of struggle and the revolutionary classes which arise of themselves in the course of the movement. Absolutely hostile to all abstract formulae and to all doctrinaire recipes, Marxism demands an attitude to the mass struggle in progress which as the movement develops, as the class consciousness of the masses grow, as economic and political crises become acute continually gives rise to revolution and more varied methods of defence and attack. Marxism therefore positively does not reject any form of struggle. (Guerrilla Warfare, p. 213 Collected Works, Vol. 2. Progress Publishers).

And the guerilla warfare and mass terror that have been taking place throughout Russia will undoubtedly help the masses to learn the correct tactics of an uprising. Marxism must recognise this mass terror and incorporate it into its tactics, controlling it and subordinating it to the in-

terests and conditions of the working class movement and the general revolutionary struggle, while eliminating and ruthlessly lopping off the hooligan version of this guerrilla warfare. (Lessons of the Moscow Uprising, Collected Works No. 11, p. 177, Progress Publishers).

For Lenin, then it was the spontaneously growing mass character, the developing mass action of the exploited and oppressed, including armed guerilla action in Russia in the 1900's, which was the context for revolutionary communists to fight to "incorporate, control and subordinate" armed action to the goal of generalised mass armed proletarian led insurrection.

And Ireland today? Is the armed struggle of the Provos (or the INLA) related to and the expression of an organically developing mass struggle? Certainly, that was the context in the period 1969-71 out of which the armed struggle of the Republican movement emerged. But was their goal then one of "generalising", organising, giving conscious expression to these spontaneous organic developments? On the contrary, their elite guerilla movement, and that of the INLA, was a nationalist conspiratorial "concoction", acting as a substitute for the masses. It has resulted in the passivity and demoralisation which the IRSP fully acknowledge to have happened in other parts of their paper.

In other words, the armed guerilla movement was increasingly divorced from the actual needs of the masses, both their social and economic conditions, and their defencelessness before state repression. The task of communists in Ireland is to fearlessly point this out, and argue for the methods of mass class struggle, both for the anti-imperialist mass struggle and the economic and social struggles of the working class, women etc.

Only this perspective can rebuild a mass movement on the streets, in the factories and communities, that will pose practically, if it is to advance, the need for mass defence including armed defence, of the ghettos, the right to march, picket and strike etc. Inevitably then criticisms of the counter-productive tactics of the Republican movement is necessary. But not from the standpoint that revolutionary communists are neutral between imperialism and Republicans. We firmly side with Republicans against their and our enemy. We defend them against repression, and assert the legitimacy of their attempt to resist and drive out the British army etc.

But, simultaneously, we argue and fight for the methods of class struggle and mass working class led resistance on all fronts, North and South. This can be the only lasting basis for simultaneously challenging and overthrowing native and foreign capitalism. That is the perspective and strategy of permanent revolution: Morgan's pathetic evasions and omissions are just one more muddled expression of the failure of the IRSP to break from petty bourgeois guerillaism. ■



LRCI NEWS

League for a Revolutionary Communist International

PODER OBRERO

Protest against 'dirty war'

IN THE October issue of its journal PODER OBRERO—the Peruvian section of the LRCI—calls on the international workers movement to protest against the dirty war being waged by the Garcia government against the workers, peasants and students of Peru.

Poder Obrero also called on the workers movement worldwide to help the Peruvian Miners Federation to recover from their recent back by sending cash donations, by protesting against repression and demanding the release of all militants arrested during the strike.

POUVOIR OUVRIER

Newspaper out!

THE SECOND issue of the new paper of Pouvoir Ouvrier hit the streets in October. The paper covers the current wage struggles in France, the state of the French Communist Party, developments in the USSR, the nature of the Sandinista revolution and USFI perspectives for party building. You can get it from the Irish Workers Group by sending £1.

GAM (Germany) AST (Austria)

German language journal launched

THE FIRST issue of a new publication, Revolutionär Marxismus (Revolutionary Marxism) has been launched. It is the theoretical journal of the German language sections of the LRCI. The issue is entirely devoted to the publication of the LRCI's "Theses on the nature of women's oppression".

The September issue of ArbeiterInnen Standpunkt (Workers Standpoint) concentrates on the theme of the crisis of Stalinism in the USSR and in Eastern Europe. It also examines the crisis developing within the Austrian Communist Party (KPO)—a previously hardline Stalinist party by now racked by debate as a result of Gorbachev's glasnost.

Debate

A debate between the Irish Workers Group and the French organisation Lutte Ouvrière on Republicanism is now being published in LO's *Lutte De Classe*, in English, French and Spanish. The fuller version of the IWG article in English is published in the LRCI's *Trotskyist International*.

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FREE THE SIX NOW!

THE RELEASE of the Guildford Four after fifteen years in the hell-holes of British prisons for something they didn't do, has rightly been met with a surge of relief across Ireland. But the manner of the collapse of the case against them at the Court of Appeal in London, where it was admitted that they had been setup by the contrived statements of a small number of bent police has also produced mounting anger.

Anger because it has long been common knowledge here and among the Irish in Britain that the four were completely innocent; that their confessions had been brutally beaten out of them in a massive stitch-up involving not only the goons of the Surrey and Metropolitan police but the Departments of Public Prosecutions right up to the trial judge, Lord Donaldson and his bewigged cronies. Anger, too, at the now desperate plight of the Birmingham Six, every bit innocent victim of the same kind of brutal exercise in 1974 when the British ruling class sought to terrorise the Irish community in Britain in the wake of the IRA's bombing campaign.

Predictably the political and clerical establishments in Ireland have quickly acted, as so often before, to pose as the champions of the oppressed Irish in Britain. Mouthing their hypocritical reservations about the British legal system they have tried to claim some identification with and credit for the success of the Guildford Four campaign. No one should be fooled by their antics for a second. The truth is otherwise. For these people and the class they represent share with the British the same ruthless determination to see the IRA defeated

and to destroy the revolt of the anti-unionist masses against their conditions of life in the Northern state once and for all.

That is what, after all, is at the heart of the Anglo-Irish Agreement and the collaboration of the so-called security forces North and South. Throughout the history of the

only too clear. Under pressure from the recent revelations about links between the North's "security forces" with Protestant murder gangs, Gardai files turning up there too, they are seeking to use the Guildford Four's release to buy time in the Anglo-Irish talks. In particular they are trying to take the heat off

Diplock courts, strip-searching and censorship they employ in the North. Reminded, too, of the fact that behind the wringing of hands and horror the Southern bourgeoisie is up to its neck in the same game—Offences Against the State Act, Section 31, Extradtion.

The task before us and all



▲ London October 19th: The release of the Guildford Four.

Free State and Irish Republic, both Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael, often in tow with Labour, have employed exactly the same tactics of terrorising the Irish masses—hanging, draconian anti-democratic legislation, beatings and framings on the say-so of police evidence alone—as a means of isolating and destroying any resistance which challenged the "good order" of capitalist Ireland, North or South. That remains the case today as Nicky Kelly and thousands of others will testify.

Behind ,therefore, these pious proclamations about the necessity for justice to be seen to be done etc. the real intentions of Haughey and his ilk in church and state are

themselves regarding the mounting protests in the North about the role of the UDR. They may well be prepared to use the inevitably growing clamour for the release of the Birmingham Six to further lean on Thatcher to make more than just the cosmetic concessions she signalled were in the pipeline. Before they can all get back to the united business of the day—defeating Republican resistance.

We must not let them get away with it. For tens of thousands of workers, North and South, have, once more, been reminded of the criminal depths of barbarity the British ruling class are prepared to stoop to, along with their torture chambers, the

anti-imperialists is to tap the anger, the willingness to struggle which is clearly there if given a decisive political lead. We need urgently to launch and build a campaign that for the first time will turn not to the liberals and humanitarian conscience of Ireland's middle classes but to the fellow workers of the Birmingham Six and the Guildford Four. We need to underline in order to build such a campaign that the daily attacks upon the living standards, wages, conditions, jobs etc of workers by both the Thatcher and Haughey governments are all of a piece with their class determination and unity to break the spirit of anti-union resistance in the North.

Public Meeting

Ditch the Programme for Economic Recovery

Dublin 9th Dec. Venue to be announced.

Reject ICTU petition

EARLY IN October the ICTU launched a campaign against the IRA's repeated bombing of the Dublin-Belfast railway line.

The campaign was strongly inspired by the Workers Party who are heavily represented on its organizing committee. Congress says the aim is to protect the jobs of workers, but these are the same leaders who deliberately sold out both wages and jobs on a huge scale during the Programme for National Recovery.

ICTU has circulated a petition among workers, calling on both governments to "take all steps necessary" to protect the railway line "against terrorist attacks". This repetition of the language used by imperialist propaganda against the Republican struggle shows the ICTU campaign in its true colours.

LABOUR'S BILL ON EVIDENCE

The crimes of the Irish state against its own political detainees make hypocrites of those in FF, FG and PD who criticize British justice. Nicky Kelly's long gaol-term on a false confession beaten out of him by the police is but one of the best known cases. Dick Spring is attempting to capitalize on the Guildford Four case by promising a Bill to make it impossible to convict solely on a confession. Such a bill could focus the struggle for an important gain against the extreme 'emergency' powers which have been accumulated by the state to strike at real opponents. For that reason alone all the stops will be pulled out to persuade Labour to fudge the issue.

Resolutions and statements must now be won in every possible section of the working class movement, openly demanding of both Labour and WP the most determined fight to push through such a Bill in the clearest and most unambiguous terms immediately. ■

Imperialist language

IWG rejects as counterproductive, and as a blow to workers' interests, the IRA attacks on the railway line. The pro-imperialist language of the ICTU petition, however, makes it impossible for workers to register their protest by signing it in this form. Instead workers should flood the offices of the ICTU and Workers Party with resolutions demanding a trade-union-led fight against all aspects of repression, in particular to win the immediate release of the Birmingham Six. ■